

#169 What would you change about modern society?

thelifeofmine3.wordpress.com/2024/07/22/what-would-you-change-about-modern-society/

July 22, 2024



| What would you change about modern society?

I would like to share a short story

“**Agni Pravesam**” by Jayakanthan is one of his most poignant short stories, first published in Ananda Vikatan newspaper. The tale revolves around a young girl from an orthodox family. Her innocence and excitement about a luxurious car and its people lead to a day of utter devastation.

Set over the course of one day, the story begins after her class, where she is waiting in the rain. A car approaches, and filled with a mix of shyness and wonder, she steps in. The young man inside takes advantage of her naivety. While it might seem trivial to today’s generation, the author’s vivid descriptions pull the reader deeply into her turmoil. When she comprehends the gravity of what has happened, she desperately pleads for him to let her go.

Jayakanthan crafts a heartbreaking scene, “When he emerged from the car’s back seat, his shoes sank into the wet sand, splashing mud onto his shoes, the car, and some onto her. Despite the open car door, he, his car, and she were all soiled. He could remove his shoes and clean his car, but how could she cleanse herself?” Upon returning home, her mother, overwhelmed by her daughter’s condition and explanation, feels a surge of despair. Not knowing how to respond, she initially views her daughter with disgust, contemplating burning coal to cleanse her, before wondering if water might suffice.

The author masterfully depicts the girl's psychological and physical struggle to reclaim her sense of purity. In the end, her mother sees her not as a defiled young woman but as a newly purified, innocent child. They agree to treat the incident as an accident, vowing silence.

The next day, when the girl encounters luxurious items, she resists the temptation. The story received significant criticism, with many arguing that the mother's reaction was unrealistic. Yet, this narrative, penned 35-40 years ago, reveals the author's forward-thinking approach, advocating for healing rather than punishment.

There is no ancient, modern, or futuristic society when it comes to emotions. Emotions are ultimately the same and should be respected from each person's perspective. Not everyone needs to accept or understand each other's emotional trauma, but at the very least, they should not be judged. This is a lesson for myself as well...